

Well^{job} Done

Afghan generals praise contributions of Robins Airman

By Ms. Chrissy Zdrakas
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ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. — Several Afghan officers visited here to recognize an Airman for helping establish a computer network system for the Afghan military.

Senior Airman Jason Lindgren, a 78th Communications Squadron computer networking specialist, forged a close working relationship with Afghan Brig. Gens. Mehrab Ali and Baba Mirza while deployed for more than four months in Afghanistan.

Airman Lindgren said because of the nature of his job, “every time we went to their office, we would poke our heads in and say ‘hi.’ (The generals) would sit us down in chairs and call for tea, nuts and berries.”

Airman Lindgren served with the Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan, a Defense Department organization of about 200 people located in downtown Kabul. The office included 10 people in the communications section and others who were health specialists, security, administrative specialists and mentors.

“When I was getting ready to leave, the officers were preparing a visit to the states,” Airman Lindgren said. “I told them ‘when you’re coming through Georgia, that’s where (I am).’”

Airman Lindgren arrived here March 2, and within days he learned the generals were on the way. He gathered for the reunion with Airmen of his squadron; his father, Jeff Lindgren, and his girlfriend, Kay Weathers.

“I’m still kind of in awe thinking about how nice and how caring and generous they are. I was on cloud nine when it was all happening,” he said. General

Ali gave Airman Lindgren a handmade marble tea set, and General Mirza gave him a small lapis jewelry box, both from material mined in Afghanistan. Then they surprised Ms. Weathers with a medallion. The generals said they had seen photos of her on Airman Lindgren’s computer and knew that he talked about her often.

General Ali said through an interpreter that it was appropriate to bring something made by the hands of the people as a token of appreciation for what Airman Lindgren had done “for Afghanistan and the reconstruction process.”

Airman Lindgren, who lived in an American compound of homes in a residential area of Kabul, said he never felt there was any imminent danger.

“It was reassuring being out with the people and seeing how nice they are,” he said. “You don’t hear much about Afghanistan on the news because it’s going so well over there. One of the things they worry about most is that we will leave.”

He said he learned through interpreters that as many as “90 percent of the people want us there.”

“Everywhere we went, children gave us thumbs up and people would smile,” he said. “Some would approach and say ‘thank you’ and shake your hand.”

With the help of his mother and others in the United States, Airman Lindgren was able to get school supplies and toys, which he and others gave to elementary schools. Personal care items sent from home were given to teachers.

“I fully realize it was a one-in-a-million assignment,” he said. “This is by far the most fulfilling assignment I’ve had yet or will have in the foreseeable future. And I would do it all again in a heartbeat.”



Ms. Sue Sapp / 78th ABW PA

Senior Airman Jason Lindgren accepts a gift from Afghan Brig. Gen. Baba Mirza. Airman Lindgren is a 78th Communications Squadron computer networking specialist, and he helped establish a computer network system for the Afghan military.